

FCI Morgantown Begins Service Dog Training Program

Inmate Veterans to be certified as service dog trainers.



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(BOP) - In November 2013, FCI Morgantown began a [Veterans-to-Veterans Service Dog Training Program](#). The [service dog program will provide training and certification to 21 inmates who will become service dog trainers](#). The inmates have been carefully screened and selected for this particular training. [All of them are military veterans and will be training dogs for veterans in the community who have mobility impairments and/or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder \(PTSD\)](#). This program is made possible through a partnership with the West Virginia University's Division of Animal and Nutritional Sciences and researchers at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Currently, the inmates are training eight Golden Retriever puppies, a Labradoodle, Labrador Retriever, and a Poodle. **The inmate trainers, and the dogs assigned to them, all reside in a unit designated specifically for inmate-veterans at FCI Morgantown.**

Veterans Live and Learn Together

FCI Morgantown paves path for successful reentry



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(BOP) - Inmate-veterans at the Federal Correctional Institution, Morgantown, WV, have their own living space, where they participate in programming conducted by volunteers from local support agencies. They receive assistance in obtaining medical and military records, health benefits, employment needs, and VA pension rules. Special classes are conducted in Anger Management, PTSD, Life Experiences, Readjustment, Relationships and Life Skills.

Currently, there are inmate-veterans representing the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines, residing in the Veterans' Wing. The program is facilitated by John Gribble and Brian Plavi, both Correctional Counselors and military veterans themselves.

Inmate-veterans who reside in the Veterans' Wing have the opportunity to become certified service dog trainers. Through the Veterans-to-Veterans Service Dog Program, in collaboration with West Virginia University's (WVU) Division of Animal and Nutritional Sciences Department and Hearts of Gold Service Dog Certification Program, inmate-veteran dog trainers can achieve various levels of certification. Once training is complete, the dogs are placed with veterans in the community who have mobility impairments and/or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Inmate-veterans George Cannady and Tony Newton, are dog trainers, and agree that the Veterans Program at FCI Morgantown provides them with a "sense of comradeship with others who are former military," and the opportunity to "obtain up-to-date information on benefits and services offered by the Veterans' Administration." Since the program's inception in 2011, more than 350 veteran-inmates have benefited from this unique program.